

REMARKS

In the Office Action of March 6, 2007 (Paper No. 20070227), the Examiner rejected claims 1-16. Applicants have attempted to address every objection and ground for rejection in the Office Action and believe the application is now in condition for allowance. The claims have been amended to more clearly describe the present invention. The specification has been amended to correct typographical and grammatical errors. No new matter has been added to the application.

Applicants acknowledge that claim 17 has been cancelled from the above-identified application as being drawn to a non-elected solvent cleaning apparatus, there being no allowable generic or linking claim. Applicants reserve the right to file a divisional or continuing application based on cancelled claim 17 during the pendency of the above-identified application.

The drawings have been objected to because where only a single view is used in an application to illustrate the claimed invention, it must not be numbered and the abbreviation "FIG." must not appear. Accordingly, Applicants herewith submit an amended drawing in compliance with 37 C.F.R. 1.121.

The Information Disclosure Statement has been rejected because it did not include an English translation of foreign patent document EP 0648521A2. Accordingly, Applicants herewith submit an English translation of European Patent No. 0648521A2 and respectfully submit that the Information Disclosure Statement is in compliance with 37 C.F.R.1.98(a)(2).

The Specification has been objected to because the Abstract is not in the range of 50 to 150 words. Accordingly, Applicants have amended the Abstract to include more than 50 words, and respectfully submit that the amended Abstract is in proper form.

Claims 1, 2, 6-12 and 16 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Berndt (U.S. Pat. No. 6,063,135). Berndt discloses a dry cleaning method including the steps of loading articles into a cleaning basket, agitating the articles in the solvent and detergent

composition in which they are immersed, removing most of the solvent and detergent composition, centrifuging the articles, heating the articles and remaining composition and creating vapors, condensing vapors and optionally reducing the pressure to dry the articles, recovering and recycling solvent, and removing the articles from the basket after cooling the articles. (Abstract).

In contrast, amended claim 1 now recites, among other things, "...the solvent cleaning process occurring independent of the wash cycles and when the solvent fulfills a first predetermined condition..."

Applicants submit that as amended, claim 1 is patentably distinct from Berndt. Specifically, in Berndt, the filtering step occurs during the wash cycle (see Col. 8, ll. 28-32), whereas in the present invention, the filtering step occurs during the solvent cleaning process, which is separate and distinct from the wash cycle. Also, in Berndt, the solvent cleaning process is indicated as "step 7" of the wash cycle, which implies that the solvent cleaning process occurs in each wash cycle, and not after the wash cycle and when the solvent fulfills a predetermined condition, as recited in amended claim 1. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection of claims 1, 2, 6-12 and 16 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b).

Claims 3-5 and 13-15 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable in view of Berndt. The arguments made above traversing Berndt are reasserted here. Applicants submit that Berndt fails to disclose or suggest all of the features recited in amended claim 1, from which claims 3-5 and 13-15 either directly or indirectly depend. Specifically, as stated above, Berndt fails to disclose or suggest the solvent cleaning process occurring between wash cycles when the solvent fulfills a predetermined condition, as recited in amended claim 1. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection of claims 3-5 and 13-15 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

New claim 18 has been added to the above-identified application, and recites, among other things "...said basic solvent refining cycle comprising the steps of cooling the solvent with

an in-line cooler and separating the solvent...”. Applicants submit that claim 18 is in allowable form because Berndt fails to disclose cooling the solvent prior to the filtration step, as recited in new claim 18. Applicants submit that there is no incentive or motivation for adding the cooling step to the dry cleaning process in Berndt. Indeed, in Berndt, a cooling step occurs after the heating cycle, which occurs after both the filtering step and a centrifuging step. Modifying Berndt to provide a cooling step prior to the filtering step would require significant alteration of the dry cleaning process disclosed in Berndt.

New claim 19 has also been added to the above-identified application and is submitted to be in allowable form. Claim 19 recites, among other things “...said basic solvent refining cycle comprising the steps of filtering the solvent in a cross-flow microfiltration membrane and separating the solvent...”. Applicants submit that new claim 19 is patentably distinct from Berndt because the filtering step in Berndt fails to disclose the use of a cross-flow micro filtration membrane, as recited in claim 19. Further, Berndt fails to suggest the use of a cross-flow micro filtration membrane, and Applicants submit that there is no incentive or motivation to modify Berndt to include such a filtration membrane.

Claim 4 has been amended to depend from claim 19 and now recites, among other things, “...said cross-flow microfiltration membrane system has a trans-membrane pressure greater than 0.5 bar but less than 10 bar.” Applicants submit that as amended, claim 4 is allowable because Berndt fails to disclose or suggest the cross-flow microfiltration membrane system, and accordingly fails to disclose or suggest the system having a trans-membrane pressure between 0.5 and 10 bar. Applicants further submit that there is no incentive or motivation to modify Berndt to include such features.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that Berndt fails to disclose or suggest the features recited in new claims 18 and 19 and therefore the claims are in allowable form.

In view of the above amendments, the application is respectfully submitted to be in allowable form. Allowance of the rejected claims is respectfully requested. Should the

Examiner discover there are remaining issues which may be resolved by a telephone interview, she is invited to contact Applicants' undersigned attorney at the telephone number listed below.

Applicants look forward to early and favorable substantive examination of the claims remaining in the application.

Respectfully submitted,

/Rebecca L. Pumphrey/ (Reg. No. 53,713)
Rebecca L. Pumphrey
GREER, BURNS & CRAIN, LTD
Customer Account No. 24978